

# Malakopi Arcade

## Interview 1



“IT HAS THIS CHARACTER THAT CONTEMPORARY ARCHITECTURE NO LONGER HAS.”

L: ‘Our goal was to find a space that suited A’s design and bridal work. We saw that all big bridal ateliers in France were located in such historical buildings, of significant architecture, and we now feel that it is an ideal way and space to continue with the atelier work.’

L: ‘Spaces like this have always been used for commercial purposes and they still have this commercial and entrepreneurial aura with them. The area has been characterized for decades as a distinct fabric retail and wholesale area in Thessaloniki. Architecturally, the building has these wonderful open areas, it’s very bright, with high ceilings, and it has this kind of noble, graceful and elegant character that

contemporary Greek architecture no longer has.’

L: ‘In the 1950s people had been through so much hardship after the war. Architecture, history and heritage were not their priority. They would see a building like this and imagine a 12-story block of flats in its place instead, a space where they could do business and make money, without paying attention to the historical side of the building.’

L: ‘We haven’t touched anything from the initial architecture, it’s only restoration work that we have done and removal of added layers on the original design elements. This has been our intention from the outset.’



HISTORICAL



PRE-RESTORATION



DURING RESTORATION



CURRENT

“IT PREDISPOSES YOU FOR SOMETHING CREATIVE AND POSITIVE.”

Q: What does working here mean to you?  
A: ‘It is much more pleasant, the space and its aura are great.’

L: ‘It encourages you to pay closer attention to detail in your work, to make things that last through time, by seeing how much (the previous owners) had invested in the detail and the materials used. And this was paid back after all, because it’s a building that still stands in a very good condition after 110 years, it’s just beautiful. It predisposes you for something creative and positive.’

A: ‘All my clients are very pleased with the space, they feel comfortable, it feels much better than previous spaces they have visited. Even my own creations look better in here, the fabrics were not visible in the previous space. The space is now more imposing.’

L: ‘That we co-exist in the same space with older entrepreneurs, like Mr. Vaskidis, inspires us to make longer-term plans, it helps to create a vision for a long-term entrepreneurship in the space.’



CURRENT



EXTERIOR

L: ‘Plus, the appointment duration is now longer, people like staying longer in the space. Clients used to stay for around 45-50 minutes, they now stay more than one hour. It’s interesting to note that people interested to rent space in the Stoa are also influenced by our space. Photographers and artists have seen photos of the atelier in magazines and show interest in the Stoa. There is new interest in the building.’

L: ‘The broader interventions in the neighborhood (bio-climatic interventions, paving etc.) have helped, and that no cars are allowed in the street. The building

breathes now, people walk and stand by to look at it.’

L: ‘This is typical of the area, it’s always buzzing with life. From as early as 9 am until 3-4 pm, it’s very busy, mainly with people over 40 years of age in the commercial business. It then relaxes, and later the younger people are here until the early hours of the morning.’

L: ‘When we tell a young woman how to get to the atelier, we usually say ‘Yaloritou St., where La Daze bar and Tattoligans (a tattoo shop) is’ and she goes ‘Yes, I got it!’ When it comes to an older woman we

mention the end of Ermou St., where retail shops are and, again, she goes ‘Yes, I got it.’ People even remember the clock that stopped in 1978 on the top of the building. So different ages and different social groups use the space and can identify with it.’

A: ‘To start with, our friends and clients were surprised that we decided to leave the previous space in order to move here.’

L: ‘The previous neighborhood matched the boutiquey style of A’s work. For the last 5-10 years the area had lost its character. It’s only now that it gradually takes a new

form. The creative entrepreneurs who have moved in the area have brought some kind of balance to the anarchy and entertainment ghetto that previously prevailed. It’s positive that there is life 24 hours a day and that young people use the space. This has its implications of course.’

L: ‘We’d like to leave our own mark in the neighborhood, I wouldn’t mind if years after people say ‘In this building designer A used to have her atelier.’

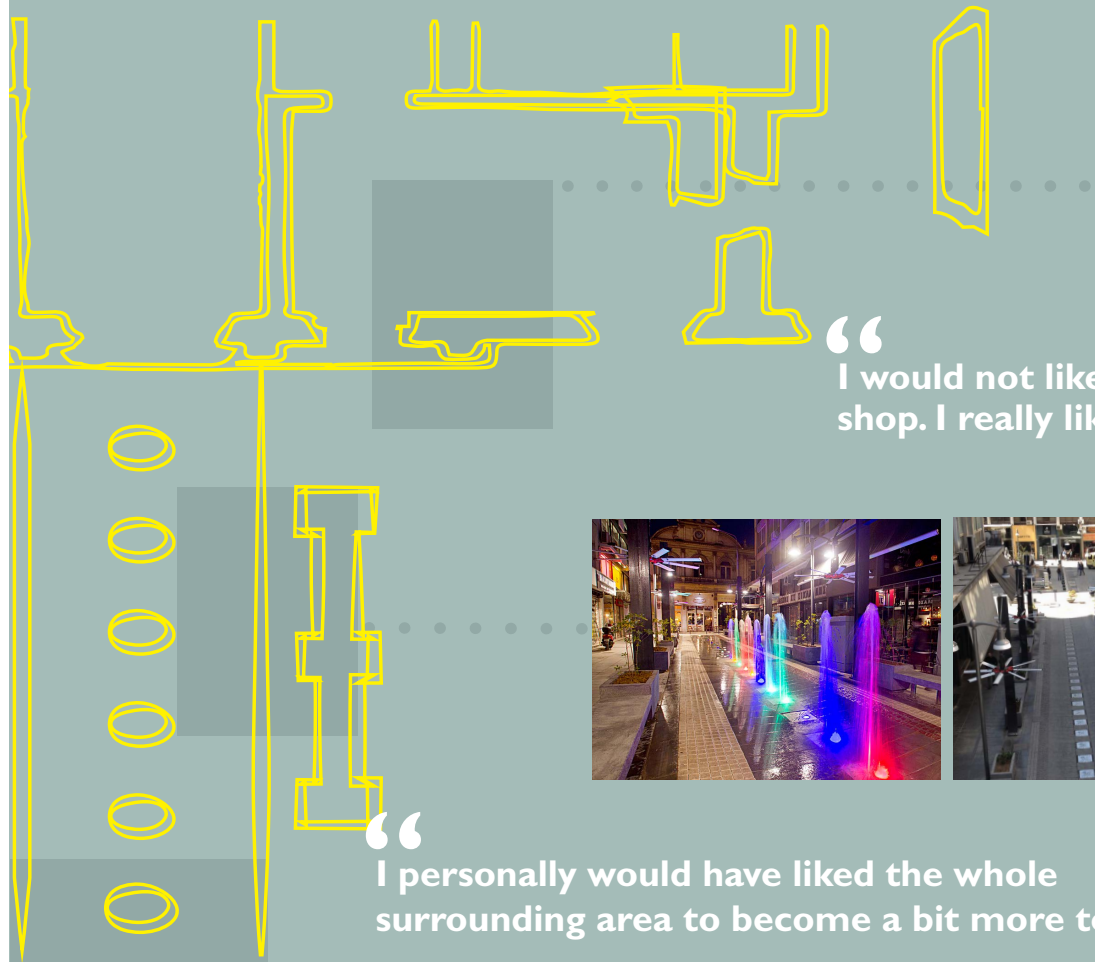
L: ‘Some practical issues need to be sorted and taken care of for the building to be

functional and to continue to be so, e.g. with heating and cooling/air conditioning, some interventions are necessary. To maintain the space the way the Ephorate of Modern Monuments wants, it takes a lot of money. Studies in collaboration with the municipality and the university, or interest-free loans for entrepreneurs could be some good solutions.’

L: ‘In other European cities this would be the best part of the city, with the best architecture. We do have potential, however, there is space for improvement.’

# Malakopi Arcade

## Interview 6



“I would not like to have another shop. I really like the building.”

“I personally would have liked the whole surrounding area to become a bit more touristic.”



When did you first open your business here in the Arcade?  
9 years ago, in 2008. Yes, I liked the building and so I opened it here. I know the story that it was Allatini’s building. I know which architect did it, we see it every day. Yes, I know the story, I got to know it from the beginning. There were difficulties when we first moved here. The neighborhood was completely different. It was a road. It had parked cars in front of your door, you could not get into your shop. In the beginning, the arcade did not have many shops and many people were subject to robberies. So something like the client walks out of his office and he could run back because he was telling him he came to the door. Many of these had happened. Then the area changed slowly, more shops came. So I mean, in 2008 I always had the blinds down in the early years, with a lock, until the neighborhood became safe again. I would not like to have another shop. I really like the building. This is purely personal I think. I like the style. When we first opened, the Ephorate of Modern Monuments came to check on the place. That meant the license would be slow, right? And it was, it took at least 6 months. This means that I was at town planning everyday, or the Ephorate of Modern Monuments, and the municipality. I did find a solution. In the end I was forced to go to the town planning department myself, because they did not find the envelope of the building, it was lost. I told him my problems and he made a phone call and after 20 minutes the envelope was found and everything was arranged.

This has to do with the fact that there were and there are sanitary, and health concerns?  
That was easy to sort out. Because inspection control comes to see you, you meet the requirements and you do it. But with the Ephorate of Modern Monuments, we had a problem because we found painting frescoes under the plasterboard and had to deal with the process of preserving it.

What were the changes you made to shape the space?  
Upstairs there was a staircase that was broken. To go downstairs, the opening was so tight, we opened it a little bit to meet the code requirements. It had to be 90 centimeters for the sanitary authority and fire department to be able to get down, so we widened it more. The ladder was wooden and very old so if you went down you did not know if it was going to break. So all this was gutted. All these granites were installed, whatever you see in the shop, didn’t exist. There were no plumbing installations, so I installed water circuits, toilets, kitchen, sinks. I do not know now whether it is the owners job or if it is our job, it’s probably a combination of both. If you see the clientele, most of them are architects, actors, etc.. I always maintain relations with conversation and good will. We have a shared backdoor through which we install all the external units because in the front we can not put anything that has to do with air conditioning. It is prohibited. So all these went to the back. In the winter we had a flood problem down in the basement. It was very messy. You do not have your own place, you’re always in touch with the rest of the tenants. Look, I personally would have liked the whole

surrounding area to become a bit more touristic. In all other European countries, all these regions are more or less touristic. More stores for the day, am I right? More coffeshops, more bars. More clothing stores. I would like it to become more commercial, so more touristic. They match.

They told us there was a banner with the story of the building, but they also removed it, is that true?  
Those who put them up, remove them. The municipality had installed it, and the municipality removed it. It ought to be there after the restoration happens. It has become much better. Of course it could have been even better because now they made fountains on the road and they need to be fixed often. The city is a cement city. Also, there are planters but there is no gardener. The shops take care of them. The guys there planted these flowers and the gentleman from across the street waters them.

Anatoli, have you seen interest from your fellow friends, or people you deal with in the area? You are telling us that it would be nice to be around?  
In the beginning, before the crisis there was more interest. There were many friends, painters, architectural offices, and photographers. They all left for other countries, and closed. Many young people made a new start here because the neighborhood was picking up. Now everybody’s gone.

You, your business, how do you see its growth within the next five years? What would you like to do?  
Something has to change politically and economically in our country.





# Malakopi Arcade

## Interview 5

Why did you choose this specific place as a site to set up your profession?

Because my profession first has the technical characteristics I needed, there are no high-ceiling buildings in the center, **I wanted to have a sense of style** as this building is neoclassical. And before I was in a similar place, but it was smaller, I was looking for something bigger, so **it fully covered my needs.**



In regards to the story of the arcade, did it play a role in you choosing this space?

No, it did not play a role. I learned it from the owner one of the building owners, because all these are co-ownerships, there are many people involved. **I liked that it has a history** in general, a sense of why the place existed, and it is important to know that things have happened there, for example. **It gives a sense and a glamour to the place,** but for my own job there were clearly some features that I could go to a building that did not have them. Typically, photography studios are underground. I generally like the spaces that I live in to have lots of light, because I stay there too many hours, I want to spend them pleasantly, and generally the people who work here to feel good. Everybody is impressed by the building. Everyone who learns the story is interested in learning something more and generally **it feels good being here,** because I have been in various studios along my career.

### FASHION PHOTOGRAPHER

Interviewee 5 is a fashion photographer and editor based in Thessaloniki, Greece. They have maintained their business in the arcade for about two months, and moved to the Malakopi Arcade in order to expand their studio. They are fond of the buzz and activity of the area and feel a sense of community from the connections built with fellow shop owners.

# Malakopi Arcade

## Interview 7

The Malakopi Arcade is a unique structure located in Thessaloniki. The building was created in 1906 by architect Vitaliano Pozzelli as the mansion for the rich and powerful Allatini family. Over the years it housed several banks, such as the Bank of Greece, and institutions. Later, it was converted into a craft area with countless shops and businesses that became a key point for passersby and merchants. The large clock in the front, holds historical significance since it stopped at the hour of the earthquake of June 20, 1978. The area was successful in the 60's and 70's, but declined in the 90's. However, today it re-emerges with a new take on its identity and charm. The Malakopi Arcade has a unique architecture and culture. Dozens of bars, cafes, and entertainment places accommodate large crowds of people. Gambrinus Czech Beer Bar is among the many businesses that cater to the night life at the Malakopi Arcade. It is owned by Mrs. Kampa, her daughter, and son, Charis Kampa.



### Before Rennovation

When we first opened the pub, it wasn't located here in this building, but where Tattoligans is now. We were at 9 Sygrou Street. So, we opened in 2006. We came here in 2013.

Are you the owner of this place?

Yes, we are the owners, my sister, my mother and I. It's a family business.

[The area] has been changing ever since 2008, as various bars started opening in the area. These places had an upbeat vibe, a vibrant atmosphere, and people standing. Before then, it had been essentially a relaxed, very cool area with an alternative crowd.

So, in 2006 when the pub first opened, what were your first experiences? What feeling did you have? In 2006, we started coming to Tessaris Epohes as customers. Tessaris Epohes is located on this alley and, if I am not mistaken, it's a place that opened in 2002. It had nothing to do with what you see today. It was a rembetiko place, basically a Greek restaurant. The music was not very loud, they played rembetika songs all day long and stayed open until 2 am. So, after Tessaris Epohes would close, people would come to our place, because you had all these local businesses in the area that used to support one another. And it was, if you can imagine, around 600 people going out every night in the same area, at the same places. It was like a closed circle, with Paparouna, Tshiki ("The Czech"), Tessaris Epohes and, at the time, Ypsilammos. We had to change location due to the fact that the music coming from the other places was too loud, so people were annoyed, we were annoyed; even those of us who worked inside the bar had a problem with it. So, you know, there was the noise pollution and later this noise pollution turned into fights that were taking place in front of the other bars. People would take our chairs and tables and throw them at each other. And it was in general a situation where we were fighting tooth and nail to survive. Of course, my personal opinion is that we have a very nice place. It's a Czech brewery, an authentic Czech brewery because that's where we come from. My sister and I are half-Czechs and my

At the Gambrinus Czech Brewery we cater to people of all kinds. From lawyers in the afternoon to punks in the evening.



mother was born to Czech parents. So as Czechs, naturally, we have a passion for beer. We like beer, so we like what we sell, we like what we do. We will probably stay here, if Greece wants us to. We will stay here.

In terms of having issues with the other owners, how are you getting along? Is there a good vibe? It's total anarchy, 100%. It's virtually impossible for anyone to understand each other, ever.

Without naming names, can you give us an example of an incident when you think there was a lack of understanding? The music. The music in some of the bars and restaurants is too loud. It's as if they are doing it to annoy you, to insult you. They're doing it blatantly right in front of your eyes, without any limitation. There is total chaos.

At the Gambrinus Czech Brewery we cater to people of all kinds. From lawyers in the afternoon to punks in the evening, rockers, Reggae bands and many actors. It's an artists' haunt, a musicians' haunt. Directors from the film festivals come here to have their after-parties. It's a very artistic place. As you know we live in a summer-loving country. Everyone is in full summer mood, we're all enjoying the little tables outside, we all like sitting there. Not even after the redevelopment which was aimed at making the area a better place and helping the business owners and the local venues. No, nothing like that happened.

The redevelopment isn't helping anyone at the moment. The water fountains are not in operation even when temperatures reach 40°C. I mean, you can see it with your own eyes, you already know what's going on. There are no trees, the fans are on for no reason. What's missing from our city? Green spaces. Green spaces. Cement must turn into greenery. We really need green spaces. For example, during the bioclimatic redevelopment that took place in the wider region of Chrimatistiriou Square, 1,000 saplings were to be planted. Bins? Proper bins. There was definitely supposed

to be better recycling. Because you have recycling companies coming here, like there is one specifically that gives us bags and asks us to put everything in them and then they say they will come and collect them. You can't find blue bins anywhere. That's all. Excuse me for speaking like this, for being honest.

There was a banner up recounting the building's story, its architects, how it was founded, designed and built, its historic significance in general. It was taken down and never put back. It pains me because the redevelopment of the area was used as an excuse. And the other thing right across the street, on the corner there, with the pictures, that tourists would come here to look at and read; that was also taken down and thrown away.

When was that? When was it put up? The year before last. And last year, with the redevelopment, I guess they thought putting it back was unimportant.

You would like them to do it. People come here and take pictures of the building. And what are we supposed to do? Come out and tell each one of them "You know, this building's clock stopped during a big earthquake. It was founded during this year, built during this period. The building belonged to the Bank of Greece. It was the Allatini building. Actually, it was the mansion of the Allatini family. The arcade was open, it had an open roof and so on". Shouldn't all this be posted somewhere, even as a short description? Together with the owners of the building, we organize something like an event that takes place twice a year. You will have probably heard of this initiative, which takes place all over the city and aims at showcasing historic sites.

The Open House. Yes. Apart from this, we are open to any proposition made by any organization in this regard. We will open our doors and wait for people to come, to welcome them and explain to them what exactly happened here.



As you know we live in a summer-loving country. Everyone is in full summer mood, we're all enjoying the little tables outside, we all like sitting there.



### After Rennovation



What's missing from our city? Green spaces. Green spaces. Cement must turn into greenery. We really need green spaces.



# Malakopi Arcade

## Interview 3

• ‘If the Ephorate of Modern Monuments is so keen to maintain the Stoa Malakopi, they may as well allow us to keep it clean – as it stands, we cannot do that, we can’t clean and paint the facade, for example. We cannot intervene at all.’

• ‘Previously I wouldn’t care, I wouldn’t notice such buildings. Once I realized how beautiful they can be if they are well made and maintained... It’s a shame that the building stands as it is.’

• ‘When I moved here the city night life was here, all of it.’ (this is the reason why he opened his sandwich shop here)

• ‘There were problems with the permission to open my shop, all caused by the Ephorate of Modern Monuments. It took nine months to get the permit. Their problem was that they would not spend time on my case, they had other cases worth of millions. Sometimes I would find them, other times I wouldn’t, a huge office with hundreds of folders on the desk, a proper mess. (he describes the state of the ephorate office) They wouldn’t even come here to see it. After those 9 months someone came and they announced that my permit was now issued. In the meantime I had to pay nine months rent (without having opened the shop yet.)’

• ‘All the cities I’ve been to, there are small shops in listed buildings, businesses that respect the building but they’re functional.’

• ‘I didn’t know anything about the history of the building before I moved here, the only thing that I knew as I was wandering around was about the clock that stopped (at 11:05 pm during the 1978 earthquake). I was in denial in a way to find out more about the building, because it took a lot of effort to open my shop.

• ‘Between 2014-2016 all of this space was unmade, unpaved, then the referendum took place (with regards to austerity measures agreed between the Greek government and the EU), so people started leaving, they couldn’t even access the space, because it was like walking in a field. It must be around ten shops that closed during those years with the outbreak of the crisis.’

•Monday-Wednesday:  
2:00 pm-6:00 am  
•Thursday:  
2:00 pm-7:00 am  
•Friday-Saturday:  
2:00 pm-8:30 am  
•Sunday:  
8:00 pm-5:30 am  
•Opened in 2010  
•lunch, dinner, coffee

• ‘The businesses are not viable. People are not paying taxes, there is no other way to survive. People are hanging on because they can’t do otherwise, they have bills to pay, they need to survive etc.’

• ‘A way to go would be to clean the space, to clean and paint the facade, to light the building and have five people (from municipality services) to check the businesses (that they work lawfully). If this space becomes a monument indeed things will go well. I’d like to see bars, nice bars, European-style bars and bistros, without the craze of loud music, decent bars open.’

• ‘When there are group of 30-35 year-olds who come to Gambrinus pub, and other pubs in the area, and chill, this is a very nice alternative corner. Then all of the sudden a bar plays skyladika very loud, and people become aggressive, this ruins the whole thing...’

“Our communication with neighbor shops and businesses concerns only the sewage system... People wouldn’t care insofar their business was not involved. There was no sense of collectivity.”

• ‘Our communication with neighbor shops and businesses concerns only the sewage system [interviewer laughs]. Unfortunately this is the case... Not even when Boutaris (Thessaloniki’s mayor) was out of his mind, coming here day after day trying to close all the bars and clubs—he would bring police cars and municipality vans to remove chairs in the middle of the night. The neighborhood had to die down. – In such cases I didn’t see much communication. People wouldn’t care insofar their business was not involved. There was no sense of collectivity.’

• ‘There are things to be done, it’s many of us who want to see change happening. We could even hold festivals here.’

• ‘I’m rather numb at this moment, thinking ahead about the future, I’m trying to hang on in there. I’m just hoping. It’s going to be the third year for me bearing such financial burden, it wears me out. I’m even thinking about moving abroad if I can’t go on longer.’

# Malakopi Arcade

## Interview 4

### 1867

Original house is built is built by the Allatini Family, featuring a mansion with a garden.

### 1906

The Malakopi Arcade is built as the Bank of Thessaloniki by Italian architect,Vitaliano Poselli, in the garden space of the Allatini House.

### 1912

The first Balkan War occurs,Thessaloniki is liberated by Greece. Later Thessaloniki becomes the state capital.

### 1917

The Great Thessaloniki Fire of 1917 happens, destroying two-thirds of the city. The Malakopi Arcade was safe from the fire, however the city faced severe damages that ushered new urban planning.

### 1939-1942

World War II. Nazi occupation in Greece.

“...it was like a small neighborhood.”

Banque de Salonique reopens as the Bank of Chios

### 1978

June 20: the Great Earthquake of Thessaloniki happens, registering at a 6.2 magnitude. The clock of the Malakopi Arcade stops at 11:05.

### 1990’s

Stockbrokers that once inhabited the arcade have left.

### 2000’s

Mid 2000’s: More bars, clubs, and pubs open up; the area gains a new nightlife.

2016: Revitalizations begin happening to the arcade.

“With the reconstruction, people started coming again in order to see a cooler place.”

“What we would definitely want is for the State to treat us completely differently.”

Is it 5 to 6 years that this has stopped? That it has stopped? Eh, 3-4.

What problems did this cause to you? That the area has been transformed this way?

First of all noise. During the daytime... there was a period that there weren’t any people here in the morning. It was much quieter. With the reconstruction, people started coming again in order to see a cooler place. Of course, now the reconstruction is complete, we have a heat wave, and the fountains are not working. From 2000 onwards, they keep coming and going, coming and going. Many architects had come, who, due to the crisis, packed their stuff and went home.

What are your main priorities?

Priorities or wish? Because as a wish, I would love it if the area also had commercial stores. I mean, to not just have nightlife.

I would prefer to have stores at the back side, where I did not give the spaces. It has to do with everything becoming similar and they all played their own music loudly. It is different to have a bar here, and another one there, and for the remaining part to be void, and it is different to have them one next to the other, changing the sound. In the end, people get bored. They do not understand anything; it is like Babel. Some of the initial tenants were brokers, meaning that there was a time, I do not know exactly when, that transactions were made in gold. Then this was banned. And there were many brokers who took gold and performed such business. I don’t know if there was ever a Stock Market during the Turkish Occupation in the area, and if this named the Stock Market Arcade.

Isn’t the square also called Stock Market Square?

Yes. During my era there were brokers. There were some broker representatives, because the only Stock Market was in Athens. We had two brokers, stockbrokers, until ’90. One was in the arcade in a small space. And opposite the street there were many. Yes, I think it must have been until ’90.

“I would love it if the area also had commercial stores. I mean, to not just have nightlife.”



“We are trying to have the spaces rented as much as possible, to have proper tenants who build things, instead of breaking them.”

